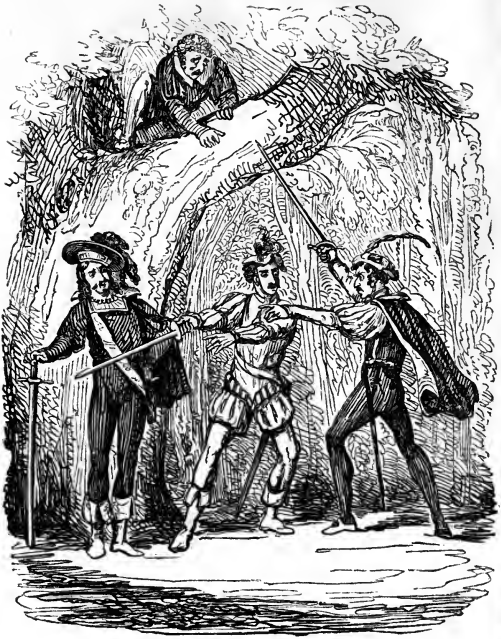
Raymond, Richard John
Robert the Devil



Robert the Devil.

Lin. Hold!—Strike first through *me;* in wounding him, you wound my honour—he preserved my life, a debt I must, I will pay. Desist, therefore, for while this arm can stir, it moves in the defence of him who bravely risked his life for mine.

Act I. Scene III.

ROBERT THE DEVIL!

DUKE OF NORMANDY;

A MUSICAL ROMANCE.

In Two Acts.

BY R. J. RAYMOND,

Author of "The Castle of Paluzzi;" "The Two make a Pair;" "The Spectre Boat!" "Charles the Terrible;" "Richelieu, an historical Tale," &c. &c.

The Music, entirely new, composed by J. BARNETT.

PRINTED FROM THE ACTED COPY WITH REMARKS,

To which are added,

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME,—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS,—ENTRANCES AND EXITS,—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE,—AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

As now performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

EMBELLISHED WITH A FINE ENGRAVING,

By MR. W. C. WALKER, from a Drawing taken in the Theatre, by MR. SEYMOUR.

LONDON:

THOMAS RICHARDSON, 98, HIGH HOLBORN.

REMARKS.

Robert the Devil.

THIS drama is a very close parody, both in incident and character, of our old favorite, *Don Giovanni*. Robert is the Don—Picolo the Leporello—Lodine the Zerlina, and Jaques the Masetto,—Matilda's statue takes the place of the commandant, and the catastrophe is essentially the same. Robert's propensities are exactly those of the Don, as Picolo's are of Leporello; to this strong imitation throughout of our old favorite, we attribute mainly the success of this piece, though Barnett's music, and the excellent acting of Bennett, Keeley, Meadows, Mrs. Vining, and Miss Cawse would have saved a much worse drama from condemnation. The story of the ring is ingeniously engrafted on the origin business of the statue. There is a drama by Pixèrecourt, called *Robert le Diable:* not having the piece at hand at the moment, we know not the extent of Mr. Raymond's obligations to it, but we believe they are considerable. Mr. Raymond has executed his task in a very pleasing manner, the comic dialogue is sprightly and whimsical, and the serious, except in one or two passages, free and spirited.

We are pleased to see Mr. C. Kemble's prompt and liberal attention to such pieces as may be presented to him acknowledged by Mr. Raymond in his dedication; we can, in two or three instances, bear witness ourselves to the truth of his assertions. The getting up of this drama was worthy of Covent Garden—eulogium cannot go further.

Of the original story of Robert the Devil, we have collected the following particulars, it will appear the Dramatist, in this instance, departs wholly from them.

The marvellous life and adventures of Robert le Diable, who was afterwards a man of worth, as the old chronicles affirm, have proved a mine of wealth to theatrical adapters.

According to the wondrous traditions handed down in the aforesaid old chronicles and the popular ballads of the time, little Robert came into the world, like crook-backed Glo'ster, "with his feet foremost," and the women cried, "Heaven bless us! he is born with teeth!" When he came to man's estate, Robert, instead of fasting and praying, caroused, and drank, and swore, and diced, and fought; wheedled fair ladies, and mocked at reverend friars, who, by way of retaliation, excommunicated him with bell, book, and candle, and other ceremonials in use among the holy fathers when the thunders of the church were to be levelled against incorrigible sinners. In pro-

cess of time Robert became a Brigand, " of indifferent fame ;" and among other exploits, one summer's morning, cut off the heads of seven hermits. So much for the *diablerie* of the story: now for the moral and edifying portion. Robert, as the legend continues, though without any clear information as to the why or the wherefore—Robert at last betrayed symptoms of grace and amendment: he began by preaching to his companions on the evil of their ways; but, as the obdurate knaves were deaf to his exhortations, he commenced his career of practical piety by knocking them on the head. He then begirt his loins with sackcloth, rolled himself in ashes, and filled his shoes with peas—detractors say that he took the precaution to boil them. After much time spent in prayer and fasting, and mortification, and occasional flagellations, he visited a holy pilgrim, who enjoined him to do penance for his past ungodliness by counterfeiting dumbness, and feeding with swine and other unclean animals. Robert obeyed, and modestly took up his abode with the hogs belonging to a certain emperor, who in those days lived in Italy, and who, as the legend morever says, had a charming daughter named Emmeline. Now, by a strange coincidence, it happened that fair Emmeline was dumb from her birth—not in the way of penance, like our incipient saint, but dumb in downright earnest; and Robert, when he had eaten his fill of bean-husks and other dainties, indulged himself in gazing on the imperial maiden as she combed out her golden locks in the clear moonlight; for such, says the legend, was her wont. It chanced, also, that an arrogant monarch of those days advanced with 30,000 Saracens against the emperor, who, God help him, could muster no more than 10,000 good men and true. And Robert was one day drinking, quite in a patriarchal way, from a clear fountain, when a miraculous voice exclaimed to him—" Arise, Robert, take this horse, this white armour, and this lance, and smite the Saracens." And Robert arose, seized his lance, mounted his charger, and rode into the thick of the fray, where he laid lustily about him, much after his ancient ungodly fashion. And the Saracens were routed, horse, foot, and dragoons; and after the victory, Robert returned to his fountain, and quietly betook himself to the society of his old friends the swine. The legend then tells how Emmeline recovered her speech, and how the white knight was discovered at a family dinner with the hogs, and how the Pope united him to Emmeline, and how Robert bade good-bye to his father-in-law, the emperor, and turned his steps towards Rouen, where his piety caused his days to be "long in the land," and obtained him the honours of canonization after his decease. Somehow the unlucky *sobriquet* of Le Diable stuck to him during his life, and even after his death, when his spirit was seen, on moonlight nights, dancing on the top of an old tower with the spirits of the seven hermits he had slain. There is positively no getting rid of a bad name.

June, 1830. ☞

TO

CHARLES KEMBLE, Esq.

Dear Sir,

Dedications, in general, are but *formal* compliments to those whose favor the writer is anxious to secure; but if I truly know my own heart, I can assert that, in this instance, it is the offering of *sincere gratitude*, since 'tis to you I am indebted not only for the materials with which I have constructed my humble edifice, but for much encouraging kindness when I was struggling into notice.---But my object in this address is, I trust, more laudable than the indulgence of literary egotism, and more reasonable than the hope that such praise as mine can be of consequence. I wish to persuade writers of better talents, who have a turn for dramatic composition, that the formidable and repulsive tales of delay and difficulty, incident to a communication with managers, are not always to be credited; and that, judging from my own experience, I venture to assure them they will in you, sir, find an encouraging candour and politeness, which the inexperienced dramatist will feel how to appreciate better than any language can suggest.---Finally, in dedicating the following piece to your name, I offer you a poor, indeed, but sincere tribute of respect for the numerous instances of your kindness towards,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged,

And humble servant,

R. J. RAYMOND.

Cast of the Characters,

As originally sustained at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

Robert, Duke of Normandy, (*surnamed "The Devil."*) Mr. G. Bennet.
Count Lindor ..... Mr. Duruset.
Edmond ..... Mr. Horrebow.
Picolo ..... Mr. Keeley.
Jaques Bocage ..... Mr. Meadows.
Gontran ..... Mr. Turnour.

Countess de Rosambert ..... Miss Lacy.
Blanche ..... Miss Hughes.
Matilda ..... Mrs. Vining.
Lodine ..... Miss Cawse.
Dame Gertrude ..... Mrs. Weston.

Soldiers, Vassals, Peasants, &c.

Scene—Normandy, during the 12th Century.

Costume.

ROBERT, DUKE OF NORMANDY.—*First dress*—Blue cloth doublet trimmed with black velvet—blue pantaloons—amber ribband—boots—sword, and gauntlets.—*Second dress*—Black velvet round tunic, gold spangle trimming, loose blue sleeves.

LINDOR.—*First dress*—Amber embroidered satin tunic—embroidered white pantaloons. *Second dress*—Chain armour.

EDMOND.—Fawn-coloured doublet trimmed with fur and gold lace—blue pantaloons—boots, &c.

PICOLO.—Black doublet and trunks, trimmed with amber and silver—amber stockings—shoes, &c.

JAQUES.—Drab doublet trimmed with blue—blue pantaloons—boots, &c.

GONTRAN.—Brown round tunic trimmed with green.

THE COUNTESS.—*First dress*—Crimson velvet gown trimmed with gold. *Second dress*—Full mourning.

BLANCHE.—White flowered satin trimmed with ermine.

MATILDA.—*First dress*—Black velvet body—white satin petticoat trimmed with ermine. *Second dress*—Stone coloured merino drapery, to represent a statue—mask, &c.

LODINE.—*First dress*—A pink merino trimmed with brown fringe. *Second dress*—White satin trimmed with silver.

DAME GERTRUDE.—Grey petticoat trimmed with black and yellow—brown jacket.

ROBERT THE DEVIL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A romantic view in Normandy,*—R. H. *the entrance to an ancient chateau*—L. H. *far back, a slender bridge crossing a winding stream; time, early morning, with the sun rising over the distant mountains. The curtain rises to the symphony of the following chorus, and a number of Chasseurs enter from the chateau.—During the chorus, Robert, enveloped in his clouk, crosses the bridge, reconnoitres the chateau, then disappears behind it.*

CHORUS.

The morning is up, and she peeps o'er the East
  To partake of the joys of the chace;
While, bashful, the cloud veils her delicate breast,
  And soft sun-beams enamel her face!
See! the fleet pack dash off the bright dew from the grass,
  And melodiously bid the cry flow,
While the minutes, down-wing'd, so enchantingly pass,
  To the sweet tune of "hark! tallyho!"

Fleet-sinew'd, the courser sweeps o'er the steep hill,
  And cheeringly sounds the blithe horn;
'Till Sol, startled up, gleams a smile on the rill,
  And kisses the red cheek of morn!
The mists from her eye he with radiance unshrouds,
  And his coursers of æther bids glow,
While the lark carols glad in her arbour of clouds,
  And mimics a shrill "tallyho!"

[*Exeunt over the bridge,* U. E. L. H.

**Enter* COUNTESS, *from the chateau,* U. E. R. H.

Countess. How lovely is the morn!—Now in his eastern porch, magnificent, sits the full sun, o'er-arched with splendrous roof of purple radiance: pale looks the west

* This speech is omitted in representation, and the Countess enters as Dame Gertrude says, "Ah! 'tis she! 'tis our dear mistress."

and languidly serene, snatching faint tints from his superfluous glow; the mountain summits checquered with streaked light, scattered through struggling mists that darken still its awful brow; the orient valley drinks deep from his genial lustre.—[*the chasseurs' horn sounds in the distance.*] While health uncouples her too anxious hounds, girds her green buskins, tones the sweet bugle, and o'ertakes the chace!

DAME GERTRUDE *appears on the bridge,* U. E. L. H.

Dame. Alack! alack! this June has a warm hand—it slackens the nerves, and makes the blood tingle in old as well as young veins! [*advances.*] Ah! 'tis she, 'tis our dear mistress!—heaven bless your sweet ladyship!

Countess. My good Gertrude!—how! have you journeyed hither on foot?

Dame G. Yes, dear lady, every step—three good leagues—

Countess. 'Tis a long way, in truth, for one at your years, and alone.

Dame G. My niece Lodine, your ladyship's godchild, would have accompanied me, but that her aged grandfather needs her constant care, so away I trotted from the old chateau, anxious to pay my respects on this your ladyship's birth-day, and to enquire after the health of your fair nieces, the ladies Blanche and Matilda, whom I had the honour to nurse, and who were placed under your guardianship at the death of their revered parents, the Count and Countess de Valancour, heaven rest their souls!—Besides, I have a whole budget of news for your ladyship,—would you credit?—Dame Simonette has buried a *second,* and married a *third* husband!—'tis the talk and laugh of the whole village: and then, who does your ladyship suppose is reported, after an absence of five years, to be about to return to Normandy?

Countess. Who, my good dame?

Dame G. Why, that reprobate Duke Robert, truly and justly surnamed *"The Devil!"* for sure some wicked demon must have presided at his birth.

Countess. Just heaven forbid!

Dame G. So say I, your ladyship, and so says every mother in the province. Yet 'tis so reported, and preparations are said to be making at his chateau, five leagues hence. But say, dear mistress, how fares the lady Blanche?

Countess. It grieves me, my good dame, to say that of late she has been sad and thoughtful, nor will she reveal the cause; but much I fear some secret passion undermines her health. Her melancholy, too, has been increased by the late mysterious silence of her sister, the fair Matilda, who, as you well know, has been long a novice in the convent of our lady.

Dame G. Sweet angel!—the saints protect her from all harm.

Countess. Our anxious fears will, I trust, be relieved this day, which brings their gallant brother from the holy wars. With him comes Blanche's affianced husband, the brave Count Edmond.

Dame G. Ay, they were youthful companions, and 'twas the fond desire of my honoured lord and lady that they should be united. But, alack! damsels seldom choose with their parents. There's my Lodine; she's beloved by Jaques Bocage, as good and brave a lad as in all Normandy.—But no, she wants a *gentleman*, forsooth!—But I tire your ladyship with my silly gossip.

Countess. Come, my good dame, you must need refreshment.

Dame G. Thanks, dear lady. In truth, my limbs are somewhat wearied.

[*Robert has just re-appeared from behind the chateau; seeing them, he hurries across the bridge, drawing down his hat to conceal his features. At this moment the Countess turns and perceives him—he disappears.*

Countess. That stranger again!—so near the chateau!—my mind misgives me!

[*Music.—They enter the chateau, the Countess still looking in the direction in which he fled.—Scene closes.*

SCENE II.—*A chamber in the Chateau.*

Enter BLANCHE, L. H.

RECITATIVE *and* POLACCA.

Poor trembling heart! why dost thou heave,
Like some sad bird, and beat thy cage;
Why with fond, idle hopes deceive,
And for thy former freedom wail?
Alas! in vain thy little rage,
'Tis *love* that guards the stedfast gaol!

POLACCA.

As when the recreant soldier hears
The silver clarions ring around,
Retreating fly his dastard fears,
And danger calls by conquest crown'd!
He girds the sword, he grasps the brazen shield,
He nods the sable crest, and hurries to the field!
So, tranquil in its retreat,
Love found unarm'd my drooping heart;
Inspir'd, unfelt, the gen'rous heat,
And, mocking, shook his beamy dart!

Enter COUNTESS, R. H.

Blanche. [*kneeling to her.*] Bless me, my more than mother!—Bless and pray for me!

Countess. How can I bestow a blessing on thee, my child, when thyself art the sole one I possess?—Yet will I pray that heaven may give thee happiness equal to thy deserts. But thou art sad of late, my Blanche: the eye of friendship is discerning; and much I fear some other cause exists than your sister's painful silence, or your approaching union with Count Edmond.—Your agitation increases,—can it be hateful to you?—Speak, I implore you! [*Blanche falls on her bosom.*] But I will spare you the confession—too well I know;—'tis he, the stranger knight, who preserved your life while hunting in the forest, and who even now was lurking near the castle, and fled at my approach, ere I could discern his features.

Blanche. [*in a faltering voice.*] Then you know all!

Countess. I do, my child, and tremble at your fearful position.—Your youthful eyes have been blind to the dangers with which this fatal passion has surrounded you; already do you stand upon the brink of a precipice,—retreat then, oh my child, ere it be too late.

Blanche. What mean you?

Countess. From this hour you must never behold this stranger more.

Blanche. Not see him! not see him, and exist?—impossible!

Countess. Dearest Blanche, let the voice of friendship rouse you from this fatal dream.—Remember, 'twas a dying parent's wish—

Blanche. True, true, I dare not disobey.—But oh, it is an offering to duty, not to love!

Countess. Time, my sweet Blanche, may do much

and the flame of love which burns unceasing in the brave Count Edmond's breast, will ere long, I trust, warm your heart, until it glow with feelings equal to his own. —Come, the banquet waits; assume your wonted cheerfulness, greet our guests with smiles, and remember that, whate'er betide, you have still a mother, still a friend!

[*Music.—Blanche embraces her; exeunt,* R. H.

SCENE III.—*The skirts of a wood,—a wall runs up one side of the stage,* L. H. *in which is a small practicable door.—Picolo discovered seated on a clump of tree,* R. H. S. E.

Picolo. A master I have, and I am his man!—of the *latter* I will say but little—on their own merits modest men are dumb,—but for the *former,* (with respect be it spoken) he is one of the greatest scoundrels in Christendom!—He has as many names as a Dutchman; and as to shapes, Jupiter was a fool to him!—A lord to-day, to-morrow a peasant.—Then the women—oh, the women!—he has a new mistress with every new suit of clothes; pretends to marry them all, too, with that precious ring of his, which I'll be sworn came out of Belzebub's own jewel-box; for no sooner does he pop it on a damsel's finger, than, *hey, presto!* she becomes his victim!—In short, he's a very devil among women, and a fighting cock among men—brave as a lion, and the best swordsman in Europe!—He's now gone after some new petticoat to the castle yonder, and has left me sentinel, to watch that door like a cat at a mousehole!—[*hurried music.*]—Eh! what's that?—symptoms of pursuit.

Voices. [*without.*] Follow! follow! [S. E. L. H.

[*Hurried music.—The door in the side wall opens—Robert, enveloped in his cloak, darts in, and secures it after him—a pause.*

Rob. So! thanks to St. Denis, I have escaped! The silly chasseurs, doubtless, mistook me for a poacher.

Picolo. And they were not much out of their reckoning.

Rob. How! rascal?

Picolo. Pardon! I mean a *gentleman poacher,* in quest of *fair game!*

Rob. Ha! ha! facetious rogue!

Picolo. Yes, sir, and that same *facetious* rogue will give you a little *serious* advice.—If you encourage *day-*

light thus to peep into our *intrigues*, I fear it will be the cause of introducing it into our *bodies!*

Rob. Psha! lovers, like soldiers, Picolo, must be ready to take the field at a moment's warning: we must storm when we can; and if the fair citadel is not to be surprised in the night, we must attack it in the day.

Picolo. But consider the danger, sir; and I am neither a gallant to court it, nor a soldier to defend it!—But seriously, sir, may I ask who is this fresh enamorata at the chateau yonder?

Rob. 'Tis the young and beauteous Blanche, niece to the Countess Reginalda—she who, some days since, at the peril of my life, I rescued from a watery grave, when her furious steed plunged with its lovely burden into the roaring cataract!

Picolo. Vastly romantic, I protest!—and you love her to distraction? [*Robert nods assent*] of course—as *usual!*—And the damsel—

Rob. Is grateful and discerning!

[*conceitedly arranging the folds of his mantle.*

Picolo. Ah! that's as much as to say she is smitten!—'Tis ever thus,—but no wonder—it can't be otherwise, if what folk say be true.

Rob. Prithee, what is that?

Picolo. That you have formed a compact with a certain *dark gentleman* who has given you the same power over women that he himself is said to possess over them!

Rob. Ha! ha!

Picolo. Aye, you may laugh, but I am almost inclined to believe it, seeing that you always prosper, and I always fail, in these matters.

Rob. Ah, Picolo, you know not woman's heart.

Picolo. But I know their *hands*—and devilish hard they are sometimes. [*rubbing his cheek.*] But may I ask, sir, is the lady acquainted with your real name?

Rob. No.—She knows me only as the Chevalier Adelbert.—You are aware 'tis my pride to be loved for myself alone.—'Tis but half a conquest where wealth and titles fix the fickle heart of woman.

Picolo. Humph! I beg pardon, but I would ask a trifling question:—what is to become of your last wife—she you married a month since?

Rob. The fair Matilda?

Picolo. Yes, whom you persuaded to elope from her convent.

Rob. Nay, I deserted her not, but left her in safety at the chateau of her uncle, old Count Rosambert, some three leagues hence.

Picolo. Pretending that matters of speedy import called you away, and promising to return in two days.—Poor credulous soul! I warrant she's sobbing her heart out. How can you be so cruel?

Rob. 'Sdeath! man, what a dull, monotonous road would life be were one not to charm it with a little variety!—Yes, Picolo, variety is my idol. I have a heart large enough to contain a plurality of beauties; and, like Alexander the Great, I sigh for *other worlds* to conquer in! [*a whistle without,* U. E. R. H.] What sound was that?

Picolo. As like a symphony of *natural music, alias whistling,* as I ever heard!—St. Iago defend us! if it should be robbers!—[*whistle repeated nearer,* U. E. R. H.] There it is again—oh! oh! my teeth chatter as if they would grind to powder!

Rob. Peace, hen-hearted fool! [*looks out.*

Picolo. Hen-hearted!—No, sir, you wrong me; my courage is great:—if I see *occasion,* I can be as bold as a lion! [*clashing of swords.*] Oh, lud! sir, what's that? [*clashing repeated.*

Rob. What do I see?—one man attacked by three?—I must, I will assist him! [C. R.]

Picolo. Don't, sir—pray, don't—consider your precious life. [*catching his cloak.*

Rob. Release me. dastard!—The world may style me *profligate,* but it shall not stamp me *coward!* [*rushes out.* R. H.—*clashing of swords.*

Picolo. [*very loud.*] Lead on, sir—I'll follow you! [*climbs up a tree.*

Re-enter ROBERT *and* LINDOR, U. E. R. H. *swords drawn.*

Rob. Spare your thanks, Signor—how did you fall into the hands of these ruffians?

Lin. The winding of the rocks separated me from a fiend, in whose company I was seeking vengeance on a noble robber.—Oh, my sweet sister!—the promises of a villain lured her from a convent's sanctuary; who, after deceiving her by a false marriage, basely deserted her!

Rob. What was that villian's name?

Lin. Robert, Duke of Normandy.

Picolo. [*from the trees.*] The devil!

Rob. Then not one more word upon the subject, Sir

Knight. This Robert is a friend, a near dear friend of mine; and it would be in me a species of cowardice to hear his name traduced.

Lin. I trust, gallant chevalier, you cannot approve so base, so dishonourable a deed?

Rob. So far from it, that I pledge you my honour Robert shall give you satisfaction when and how you please. But are you certain he has deceived your sister?

Lin. Alas! too well! I learnt the fatal truth at the chateau of our maternal uncle, the venerable Count Rosambert. Even now she wanders a wretched maniac, none know whither. Just heaven! grant I meet the villain, and a brother's arm shall vindicate a sister's honour.

Edmond. [*without.*] Look to the horses—I'll search the wood. [*Enters,* U. E. R. H.] Lindor, well met. I feared some danger had befallen you.—But what do I see?—my friend in company with our mortal enemy!

Lin. Our enemy?

Edmond. Yes, despite that humble garb the villain is discovered.

Rob. [*drawing, stands on his guard.*] Yes, I am Robert of Normandy!—the odds of numbers shall not oblige me to deny my name.

Lin. Robert!

Edmond. [*advances.*] Strike the villain down!

Lin. [*interposing.*] Hold!—Strike first through *me;* in wounding him, you wound my honour—he preserved my life, a debt I must, I will repay. Desist, therefore, for while this arm can stir, it moves in the defence of him who bravely risked his life for mine.

Edmond. Wouldst thou be pander to a sister's shame?

Lin. No!—I will revenge it—terribly revenge it!—[C. L. *with Edmond.*] Duke Robert, thus I have returned the obligation that I owe thee;—remember, when next we meet, I am thy deadly foe!

[*Exeunt Lindor and Edmond,* S. E. L. H.

Rob. When and how you list, proud spark. You shall find that, whether good or ill, Robert of Normandy has courage enough to defend his deeds. How now! where is that knave?—Picolo!

Picolo. [*from the tree.*] Here, sir!

Rob. Descend, coward!—Wherefore did you fly when I was attacked?

Picolo. It was my *modesty,* sir!—I could'nt presume to share honour with my master.

Rob. Coward!

Picolo. Coward ?—You mistake, sir—I'm only *afraid*, that's all !

Rob. Night draws on—listen to me.—The spark who accompanies Count Lindor is my charmer's expected bridegroom ; therefore must I be speedy, or the maiden is lost to me. The lake which bathes the castle's walls will aid my project. Be it thy business to procure a skiff, and at nightfall hie thee beneath the western tower, 'tis there the lovely Blanche reposes.

Picolo. What I, sir ?—at night—alone—in a boat !—Bless you, I've no more idea of steering than an elephant has of dancing !—As sure as fate I shall run bump against a rock, and I've little *notion* of swimming, and none at all of drowning !—Besides, who knows but the demons of darkness may raise a storm on purpose to——

Rob. Still at thy coward fears. Psha ! be a man.

Picolo. I am a man—that is, a middling sized one !

Rob. See that you do my bidding, sirrah, or dread my vengeance! I, meantime, will gain fair Blanche's chamber, win her to my purpose, and bear her off in triumph to the castle of my ancestors. Away !

[*Music.—Exit,* L. H.

Picolo. His ancestors !—Now am I not over curious, but I should like to know who the *devil* were they !

[*Music.—Exit,* R. H.

SCENE IV.—*Blanche's chamber,*—L. H. *a couch*—R. H. *a table, on which burns a silver lamp, the scene otherwise gloomy.—Music.—Blanche discovered asleep on the couch. A short pause;—Robert then enters through a sliding pannel in flat.*

Rob. How ! the lovely Blanche not here ?—and yet 'tis past the appointed hour of meeting. Should she mistrust me !—vain fear ; I have entwined myself too firmly around her heart, that the link should in one moment snap !—[*perceives her on the couch.*]—Ha ! by heaven 'tis her own fair self! [*takes the lamp from the table and holds it over her.*] How lovely e'en in sleep—death's semblance! She shudders !—her lips quiver, and the rose forsakes her cheek !—Some fearful dream, perhaps!—[*takes up a lute from the couch.*] Thus will I gently break her slumber.

[*he plays a short air—Blanche starts up from the couch.*

Blanche. Ha ! those sounds !—where am I ?

Rob. Safe in thy lover's arms !

Blanche. [*looking at and starting from him.*] Ha! the self-same form too!—away, leave me!

Rob. What ails my love?

Blanche. He speaks!—'twas but a dream, then—yet 'twas so terrible!—But 'tis past now—I see you, Adelbert, and feel that I am safe. [*clings to his arm.*

Rob. My life, my love!—I have braved every danger to hold communion with thee.—This hated bridal, Blanche, I know that your heart loathes the very name of it. Let us fly, then—there is a spot of earth, my Blanche, beautiful, aye more beautiful than the most vivid fancy e'er imagined; thither will I lead you, and you shall make of it a paradise, where, protected by my watchful love, no adverse breath shall invade to break our rapturous repose; it shall be an elysium sacred to us alone!—If she now resists, she is no woman! [*aside.*

Blanche. Oh Adelbert, what a delightful picture have you traced. But no, no, it cannot, must not be!—A dying parent's command I dare not disobey!—and yet, to wed a man I cannot love—the thought is dreadful!

Rob. Ay! think, my Blanche, think what will be your feelings when this bridegroom comes to claim your promised hand,—when you press the joyful couch, your eyes filled with tears, your bosom heaving with constrained sorrow: will you endure all this?—will you not think of the rejected Adelbert?—of him whose every look was your own—whose every thought was of you—whose every word breathed forth disinterested, devoted love!

Blanche. Spare me, Adelbert, oh spare me!
[*sinking on his bosom.*

Rob. She is mine! [*aside.*]—Dearest Blanche, 'tis vain to combat against fate—we are destined for each other. Behold, my love, this antique ring, on which is rudely carved a heart and two hands enclasped which join its circle, 'twas given me by a famous German wizard, who said that it was *charmed*, and would ensure eternal constancy between the giver and the receiver. Thus, then, in placing it upon thy finger, are we for ever indissolubly united! [*puts it on her finger—a chord of music.*

Blanche. Heavens! what a sudden thrill pervades my frame!—Take, take it off again!

Rob. Nay, this is maiden weakness!—The night wears. Beneath this tower a skiff awaits us;—let us fly, my love.

Blanche. Oh, Adelbert, whence thy power over me? —unwillingly I yield. Then, oh, betray me not; and remember, as thou dealest by me so wilt thou be rewarded.

SONG.—BLANCHE.

(The poetry by Sir Walter Scott.)

Where shall the lover rest
Whom the fates sever,
From his true maiden's breast
Parted for ever?
Where thro' groves deep and high
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow,
Soft shall be his pillow!

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying,
There shall he be lying!

[*They are about to depart, but suddenly stop on hearing a voice without sing the following verse to the same air.*

Her wings shall the eagle flap
O'er the false hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap
'Ere life he parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever,
Blessings shall hallow it
Never, O, never!

Blanche. Heaven! that voice!—'Tis she, 'tis my dear sister!

Rob. Your sister!—'till now you never named her.—Whence comes she?

Blanche. She is here!—away, away!

Rob. Anon I will return. Curse on this interruption! [*aside.*

[*Music.—He disappears through the secret pannel,—at this moment Matilda enters,* U. E. R. H. *in great disorder;—over her head is thrown a long black veil. She staggers forward, and falls into Blanche's arms.*

Blanche. Dearest Matilda! and do I once more press thee to my heart?

Matilda. [*wildly.*] No, no, Matilda is dead!—'tis but her spirit that wanders;—yet awhile, and that too will be at rest.—Yes, I feel my doom fast creeping through these veins!

Blanche. Oh, heaven, her senses wander!—Sister, dear sister! [*thunder.*

Matilda. [*darting towards the back.*] Hark! hark!—heard'st thou not that strain amidst the storm?—'Tis the signal for our meeting;—my lute, my lute—I'll answer him.

[*Snatches up Blanche's guitar from the couch, and plays the same air that Robert executed.*

Blanche. Heaven! the very air which Adelbert—

Matilda. He comes not—he will not come—he has cruelly deserted me, and nought is left the wretched, heart-broken Matilda but to die!

[*throws herself on the couch.*

Blanche. [*hurrying to her.*] Matilda, dearest Matilda, look up—'tis thy sister, 'tis Blanche calls upon thee.

Matilda. [*rising, and speaking in a faint voice.*] I know thee now.—That voice recals my wandering senses, and reminds me of my errand here.—Yes, Blanche, 'twas to reveal my shame, and on that much-loved bosom breathe my last. [*falls on her bosom.*

Blanche. Speak, dearest Matilda! [*thunder.*

Matilda. Hark! thus on that fatal night the thunder rolled and the vivid lightning flashed!—yet did I brave it all to fly with him.

Blanche. Sister, I conjure you, explain this horrid mystery.

Matilda. Yes, Blanche, thou seest a lost, betrayed, dishonoured wretch—the sport of a vile seducer!—I was basely deceived by a holy ceremony and sacred vows;—with his own hand the traitor placed upon my finger the bridal ring—it was a *charmed* one, he said, and would ensure eternal constancy—

Blanche. Oh, heaven! the very words which—

Matilda. [*seizing her hand.*] Gracious powers! what do I behold? [*examines the ring.*] A heart—two hands enclasped!—it is, it is the very same!

Blanche. [*wildly.*] No! no!—it cannot be!—you have still your own!

Matilda. No, the traitor, on confessing our false marriage, regained possession of it.

Blanche. No, no, thou art deceived!—*He* false!—I'll not believe it. [*hastens towards the back, exclaiming.*]—Adelbert! Adelbert! come forth and vindicate thyself!

Music.—ROBERT *enters through the pannel,* R. S.

Rob. Thy Adelbert is here! [*advancing, sees Matilda, and starts.*] Heavens, Matilda!

Matilda. [*shrieking.*] 'Tis he!—'tis Duke Robert!

[*a chord of music.*

Blanche. Duke Robert!

Matilda. I faint!—I die! [*falls senseless to the earth.*

Blanche. [*kneeling, and upraising her head.*] Matilda! Matilda!—she hears me not—she is dying!—[*calls.*]—Help! help!—villain, behold thy work!—Hence, and take with thee this accursed gift!—there's poison in its touch. [*tears the ring from her finger, and thrusts it into his hand.*] My dear, dear sister!

[*sinks upon her body,* L. H.—*thunder.*

Rob. Matilda her sister!—I did not look for this!—But hence remorse!—ha! footsteps approach, the castle is alarmed,—then must I in flight seek safety!—To the boat, to the boat!

[*Hurried music.—As he darts through the secret pannel, a number of female attendants enter,* R. H. *and raise Matilda and Blanche—at this moment the back wall of the chamber is struck by a thunderbolt—falls with a loud noise, and discovers the lake very much agitated. —A skiff, containing Robert and Picolo, is seen driving on the water, as the drop falls.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The exterior of a Norman Cottage.*

Enter JAQUES, L. H. *singing—a bundle of faggots on his back, and a nosegay in his hand.*

Jaq. So, I ha' had a tightish morning's work on't,—well, here be my two presents; a bundle of faggots for her old grandfather. [*places it inside the cottage door.*] and a posy for Lodine—what a pretty couple we two should make!—I can't think what do make her so cross-grained, not I—I be sure I do love her a mortal deal bet-

ter than the fine gallant that ha' come courting her. [*Lodine sings without*, R. H.] Ah, lord bless her! here she do come--I can't tell how it is, but when she do come near, I be all over a burn one moment, and all over a shiver the next—and I'm told that be very like being in love!

Enter LODINE. *singing*, R. H.

Lod. Now to visit my poor old grandfather.—Ah, Jaques, good morning.

Jaq. Ah, bless you!—Look here, Lodine, I ha' brought you a posy—there be *heart's-ease*, and *love lies a bleeding*, and *bachelor's buttons*, and such like,—and as the evenings do get somehow coldish, I ha' been cutting some faggots for your old grandfather.

Lod. Thanks, my kind fellow! If gratitude, sincere gratitude for your attentions, can make you any return——

Jaq. Ah, Lodine, *gratitude* an't the thing I do want. [*bashfully.*

Lod. No, Jaques!—What then!

Jaq. Ah, you know well enough. We ha' grown up together like two beautisome young shrubs; now we are for all the world like two handsome young trees; and if we were just to *marry* a little bit,—why I do think—so I do—

Lod. What, Jaques?

Jaq. Why, that there would be desperate charming *blossoms!* [*bashfully.*

Lod. How often must I tell you, my good Jaques, that, to form perfect happiness, there must be union of mind and similarity of education,—ours differ widely, —therefore, if you have any regard for me, you will not distress me by another word on the subject.

Jaq. Ah, I do know what this do mean—but tho' I an't to be compared to this fine spark that ha' come courting you, I defy him to love thee better. [*wipes his eye.*] But I ha' done.—Bless thee, bless thee, dear Lodine; and if thee canst not *love*, do say that thee wilt never *hate* me.

Lod. Hate you—oh, never! [*extending her hand.*] Never!

Jaq. [*kissing it.*] Thank'ye, thank'ye!—Come, I'm not so unhappy as I thought I was. Mind now, thee wilt never hate me! [*aside.*] I'll go home, [C. R.] and

practise a bit on mother's rusty guitar, and try if I can't play as well as this troubadour chap, as he calls himself —and then who knows but—[*looking at her.*] Dear! dear! what a pretty couple we two should make!

[*Exit,* R. H.

Lod. Poor fellow! did he know I was on the eve of wedding another!—Heigho! I'm sadly changed of late. But a short time since I was the gayest of our village maidens.—Ah, no wonder, for then I knew not love!

SONG.—LODINE.

I saw, what seem'd an artless child,
With wings and bow,
And aspect mild;
Who sob'd, and sigh'd, and pin'd,
And beg'd I would some boon bestow
On a poor little boy stone blind!

Not aware of the danger, too soon I complied,
For exulting he cried,
And drew from his quiver a dart,
"My pow'r you shall know"—
Then levell'd his bow,
And wounded me—right in the heart!

Enter DAME GERTRUDE, L. H.

Lod. Well, dame, have you seen our dear mistress?

Dame G. Yes, poor lady, and found her still inconsolable at the death of her niece, the lady Matilda. And to add to her grief, she has just learnt that the lady Blanche, who, two months since, fled to a convent, has taken the veil, and thus for ever secluded herself from the world.

Lod. Ah, never shall I forget that terrible event, and the horror which was depicted on her countenance, when she found that her lover, the supposed Adelbert, was no other than Duke Robert, the terror of Normandy!

Dame G. The villain! 'twas well for him he fled the country, or the sword of the gallant Count Lindor would have avenged his sister's dishonour, and thus rid the world of a scoundrel!

Lod. Ah, how unlike my Henri!—he, I'm certain, is all truth and honour!

Dame G. He's a fine spark, to be sure.

Lob. Is he not, dame?—so gay, so courteous, and so handsome!

Dame G. Still, Lodine, methinks you would have done better to select a more humble companion for life; and there are many lads of our village who would be proud of your hand.—Young Jaques, for instance; 'twill break his heart to lose you.

Lod. I own Jaques is a good, a brave lad; but then, dame, my heart tells me——

Dame G. That this Mr. Henri is its master!—Well, well, I have done; heaven send you happiness!—Her ladyship has graciously permitted the nuptials to take place in the castle-chapel; and has promised, should her spirits permit, to grace them with her presence.—And hark! the villagers are already coming to escort you thither!—So in, girl, in, and prepare. Since you're resolved to get married, why the sooner 'tis over the better, as my dear deceased husband used to say!

[*Exeunt into cottage,* L. H. *in flat.*

SCENE II.—*A gothic hall with large folding doors in the centre, opening upon a chapel.—On each side the folding doors an arched niche;—that to the left is occupied by the statue of Matilda—that to the right is occupied by another statue of equal size and height. Music.—On the opening of the scene, villagers discovered decorating the hall with garlands. They presently exeunt,* U. E. R. H.

Enter ROBERT *and* PICOLO, R. H.

Rob. Ha! ha! why thou hypocritical varlet! when thou hast all the inclination to be thyself a libertine, yet lack the courage and address, dost thou presume to lecture *me?*—Another word, and by heaven——

Picolo. I can't help it—beat, kick, kill me, if you will—I must discharge my heart, and, as a faithful valet, make a last effort to reclaim you.—Pray, signor, do you ever reflect?—If you don't, I do; and (I speak as a friend) beg to state that you are going on in a very bad way—post haste to the devil!—Not satisfied with having destroyed an unhappy damsel, you have the audacity to return, after an absence of two months, which you ought to have spent in penance and prayers, to the very same spot, under the assumed name of Henri, a troubadour, and are about to immolate another victim!

Rob. [*smiling.*] Go on, sir, go on!

Picolo. [*aside.*] Oh, it's of no use talking plainly—I'll lecture him *allegorically.*—[*aloud.*]—Take *warning*

then, (I don't mean that I *discharge* you because my wages are due—I speak in admonition.)—The pitcher goes often to the well, but at length is broken; and, as some *unknown* author wisely observes—man is like the bird on the branch—the branch clings to the tree—who clings to the tree, follows good example—good example is better than fine words—fine words are found at court—at court are courtiers—courtiers follow fashion—fashion comes of fancy—fancy is a faculty of the soul—the soul gives life—life ends in death—and death should make you think what the devil will become of you!

[*This is delivered in a serio-comic tone of admonition,—Robert turns round to view the hall, then coolly enquires,*

Rob. What think you, Picolo?—those garlands are tastefully hung.

Picolo. I'm pulverized at his coolness.—You are resolved, then, to jilt this poor girl? [*advancing up the stage, sees the statue of Matilda, and starts.*] and before the statue of your last wife—that should have been—the unhappy lady Matilda.

Rob. Ha! I saw it not before.—'Tis finely sculptured, and very like her too!

Picolo. Poor lady! you gave her a sad heart-ache.—Never shall I forget her fond, confiding look, when, believing you all truth and constancy, you said, "*My ring, I swear, shall deck Matilda's finger.*"

Rob. Did I say, "I swear it"?

Picolo. Yes, and a good knight never breaks an oath.

Rob. Right, virtuous Picolo, and mine shall be fulfilled to the very letter. Here! [*gives his ring.*

Picolo. What do you mean?

Rob. I swore my ring should deck Matilda's finger—it shall—carry it to the statue. [C. L.

Picolo. To—to the statue!—Come, come, sir, a joke's a joke, but—

Rob. Do as I bid thee.—Assume a respectful air, advance, and say to her, "I place upon your finger the ring of my lord and master."

Picolo. Ridiculous!—address a statue!—[*Robert threatens.*] I'm going—I'm going.—Hem!—may it please your stony ladyship, I place upon your finger the ring of my lord and master. [*places it on the statue.*

Rob. Now add—"when it pleases you, come and seek your bridegroom—he is here!"

Picolo. [*repeating.*] When it pleases you, come and seek your bridegroom—he is here!

[*rustic music without—Picolo runs forward.*

Rob. They come. Say, will Bertrand and his followers be here as I commanded?

Picolo. Yes, Signor Bertrand is to act the monk in this mock ceremony; and I warrant me he is not the first sanctified scoundrel who has used the cowl as a cloak to his vile purposes.

Rob. Enough!—I go to meet the fair Lodine, and hark'ee, sirrah, if that precious life of yours be of any value, you will listen and be silent.

[*touches his sword and exit,* L. H.

Picolo. *Listen* and be *silent!*—That's as much to say open your ears and shut your mouth, or see what I will send you! [*draws his finger across his throat.*

Music.—Enter VILLAGERS, *dancing,* L. H. ROBERT, LODINE, DAME GERTRUDE, PALMER, *&c. following.*

Rob. To the church, friends; the holy palmer waits. [*approaches Picolo, while the girls prepare to escort Lodine.*] Now, Picolo, my ring—quick! [*Picolo appeals to him.*] My ring, I say!

[*Music.—Picolo goes to the statue, and returns in terror.*

Picolo. Ah! ah!—O! O!—

Rob. What ails the fool?

Picolo. As I hope to be saved, sir, the marble finger is *bent,* and the ring's immovable!

Rob. Sirrah, this is no time for jesting.

Picolo. As I'm a living sinner, I don't jest. Go yourself. [*trembling.*

Rob. To the proof then.

[*He advances towards the statue, but stops on hearing the villagers shout.—Lodine hastens to him.*

Lod. Joy, joy! Henri,—the Countess de Rosambert, our kind mistress, comes to grace our union.

[*returns up the stage.*

Rob. The countess!—Should she recognize me!—impossible!—this humble garb—the lapse of time since last we met—she comes! [*stands aside with Picolo,* L. H.

Music.—The COUNTESS, *in complete mourning, enters from*

the chapel with attendants—all pay their respects. The scene gradually darkens.

Dame G. Welcome, dear lady, among those grateful hearts made happy by your bounty.

Countess. Would, my kind friends, that I could be a sharer in your innocent amusements,—but no, joy is for ever banished from this breast!—Too well, alas, ye know the cause!—I mourn Matilda, the victim of a heartless libertine!

Picolo. [*in a low trembling tone to Robert, who stands unmoved.*] How do you feel, sir?

Countess. My sweet Lodine, you are about to become a bride; may you be happy as you are virtuous. Mine shall be the hand that yields you to a husband's care.—Let him approach.

Lod. He is here, dear lady. Henri, the Countess de Rosambert.

[*Music.—She leads Robert forward and presents him to the Countess, who starts. A chord of music.*

Countess. Gracious powers! those features!—Lodine, Lodine, you are betrayed!—this is no troubadour!—'tis he, the fell destroyer of my child!—'tis Duke Robert!

Omnes. Robert!

Rob. [*with great sang froid.*] Sure grief distracts thee, lady—*I* Duke Robert!—Lodine, my friends, believe it not. Question, else, my gallant comrade here.

[*points to Picolo.*

Picolo. [*stammering.*] Who, I?—to be sure—certainly.—If you be not what you *really are,* I know not who *the devil* you are!

Countess. Villain! false, perjured traitor! [*points to Matilda's statue.*] Behold the victim of thy cruelty!—of thy plighted vows!—now cold and lifeless as her marble image!—Darest thou kneel before it, and swear thou art not her destroyer?

Rob. By heaven and earth, I swear—

[*He advances to the statue, which suddenly lowers its arm, points to him, and exclaims* "Robert!"—*A loud burst of music—all utter an exclamation of terror,—Lodine sinks into Dame Gertrude's arms—Robert shrinks back, and Picolo falls upon his knees.—Thunder and lightning, which illumines the painted casement of the chapel.—Scene closes rapidly on this picture.*

SCENE III.—*A hall in the Castle.*

Music.—Enter COUNT LINDOR, DAME GERTRUDE, PEASANTS, *and* SOLDIERS, L. H.

Dame G. Alack, my dear young lord, 'tis even as I tell you. The countess called upon the peasants to protect her, but in vain.—Robert summoned his myrmidons, who bore off my poor Lodine, still senseless, to his castle.

Lin. Villain!—Burning to avenge a sister's shame and death, with these, my gallant followers, I pursued the villain, step by step, throughout all France. Each succeeding day promised to yield him to my thirsty sword; yet ever, by some accursed mischance, did he elude my grasp.—At length, to my despair, I lost all trace of him. —But say, the countess—

Dame G. Was likewise made a prisoner, to remain, as he declared, a hostage for his safety.

Lin. Vengeance, vengeance!—You hear, my friends? Arm all, and swear never to sheathe your swords till revenge be satisfied!

CHORUS.

Revenge! revenge! our souls inspire!
Arise! destroy! with sword and fire!
The traitor we will quick surprise,
Escape is vain—he dies! he dies!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A gothic chamber in the Chateau of Robert —a practicable casement in flat—a table under it—chairs, &c.*

Music.—Enter ROBERT *and* LODINE, R. H.

Rob. Nay, lovely Lodine, banish this dejection, wear once more the bewitching smile with which you were wont to greet me as the humble Henri, and learn the real cause of that deception.—It was that I might enjoy the greatest bliss that human heart can feel, the pleasure of being beloved for what I *seemed to be*, and not for *what I am!* The love that's purchased by wealth and titles to me is valueless: but thou, Lodine, thou hast proudly triumphed; and now, as freely as before, I offer you my hand—my heart is thine already!

Lod. [*aside.*] Oh that I dare speak!—but I am in his power, and therefore must dissemble.

Rob. [*aside.*] She wavers!—oh, woman, woman!

[*aloud.*] Be kind at once, my sweet Lodine; you are above the petty pride of adding to a lover's sufferings, merely to prolong your triumph.

[*a guitar plays without—piano,* R. H.

Lod. [*aside.*] Ha! that well known air!

Enter PICOLO, *hastily,* R. H.

Picolo. [*aside to Lodine.*] I'm your friend—mum!—[*aloud.*] Here is a poor minstrel at the gate, sir; he has been playing love ditties, and *twang-twang-dillo-ing* it this half hour. [*holds a slip of paper behind his back.*

Lod. [*aside, reading.*] "Jaques Bocage!"

Rob. [*bringing forward two chairs.*] Eh! Bocage!

Picolo. [*suddenly stooping to tie his shoe, thrusts the paper into his mouth.*] Ye-es, sir—'tis all about a *bocage*—shady groves and cooing doves—one of the songs he sang.—Poor fellow! he seems sadly fatigued—may I give him a mouthful?—I've just taken one myself!

Rob. Conduct him here.

Picolo. [*aside. as if having swallowed the paper.*] There, it had well nigh choked me—but I'm not the first man who has been forced to *eat his own words!*

[*Exit,* R. H.

Rob. Yes, the troubadour shall ever be a welcome guest, for 'twas in that character I wooed and won my fair Lodine!

Music.—Re-enter PICOLO *with* JAQUES, *disguised as a wandering minstrel,* R. H.

Picolo. This way, my friend. Pay your devoir to his lordship, while I prepare you a substantial snack.

[*Exit,* R. H. *making signs to Lodine—the remainder of the scene consists of by-play between her and Jaques.*

Rob. Approach—who are you?

Jaq. Why I be a poor fellow, sir—I've wandered many a weary mile with nothing but this rusty old guitar to keep the wolf from the door. How I long to break it about his head! [*aside.*

Lod. [*aside.*] Generous fellow!—Yet should he be discovered!

Rob. You seem affected, Lodine.

Lod. I feel, my lord, the sorrows of this artless wanderer; and hope that heaven has happier days in store for him.

Jaq. Ah, lady, that be clean out of the case.—Poor dear *Laura!*—I do love her so, I do—heart, soul, and all:—and once she did love *me*, and I was as happy as the day was long!

Lod. Poor fellow!—I pity you most sincerely.

Jaq. Thank'ye, madam, thank'ye!—Yes, I once laid a bit of a plan to save her from a villain, and got her in the mind; but her heart did fail her in the very moment. [*significantly.*

Rob. Ay, that was a pity, indeed!

Jaq. Now, wasn't it, sir?

Rob. Well, and what was this same curious plan? [*rises and turns to Jaques.*

Jaq. Main difficult, sir. [*leading him gradually forward.*] I got in at the *window*, [*points unseen by him to the casement.*] and under the window I had four of my comrades with a nice soft *feather-bed*—a feather-bed, miss!—You know what a feather-bed is, sir?—a feather-bed be a bed made all of feathers; it's pure and comfortable. [*Lodine by this time has mounted the table, and opened the casement.—Robert is turning—Jaques plucks him back, and points to his face.*] Lord, sir, what be that on your face?

Rob. My face?

Jaq. [*watching Lodine.*] No, not there, sir; a little higher:—now it is gone—*now, now!*

[*Lodine, about to leap, throws down the table, and remains terrified on the ledge of the window.*

Rob. Ha! betrayed!—A guard!—Return this instant, or thy minion dies! [*draws his sword.*

Jaq. No, don't ye, don't ye come back.—Don't ye mind me, I be not worth a thought; and to save thee from dishonour, I would die a thousand times—I would indeed!

Rob. Perish, rascal!

[*Music.—Robert advances to strike—Lodine springs down, catches his arm, and stands guarding Jaques' body,* L. H.—*at the instant four soldiers rush on,* R. H. *and surround Jaques.*

Lod. No, Jaques, no! you must not die for *me!* [*falls into his arms.*

Jaq. A hug!—O bless you, Lodine, bless you!—Now, gentlemen, cut me up as fast as you please!

Rob. Tremble, reptile!

Jaq. No, I don't tremble a bit. I never did harm a fellow creature in all my born days—then why should I tremble?

Rob. Away with him! [*guards seize Jaques.*] Lodine, your maidens await you in your chamber—retire.

Lod. Spare him, my lord, oh, spare him!—his only crime is loving me too well. [*Robert motions.*] I go—oh, Jaques, remember me! [*Exit,* R. H. *with two guards.*

Jaq. Remember thee! ay, that I will, dear, dear Lodine!—Now, *gentlemen,* you may shew me to my dungeon; and when I do get there, you shall hear me whistle and sing like any blackbird in his cage:—for if your fine sparks be so gay and so happy when they be bringing a poor girl to sorrow and to shame, what must I feel, [*laying his hand on his heart.*] when I ha' risked my life to save one from both?—March on, my lads; who's afraid! [*struts off,* L. H. *with two guards.*

Rob. Audacious stripling!

Enter PICOLO, *running,* R. H.

Picolo. Oh, sir!—oh, my lord!

Rob. [*seizes him.*] Sirrah! knave!—knew you of this trick, this cursed stratagem?

Picolo. I know!—now do I ever know any thing?—Look in my face—is it not the *indicative mood* of *perfect* ignorance?—But *this* I do know, and came to tell you, that the countess's vassals are up in arms, and swear to rescue her, and give you a taste of their cudgels.

Rob. Let the fools come!—henceforth, I will keep no more half measures. Thou and I will be buried in this castle, and bid defiance to my foes.—Why d'ye tremble?

Picolo. What I, sir?—bless you, I—I don't tremble; I think being buried alive a mighty good joke!—'twill save the expence of a funeral!

Rob. Away!—prepare a sumptuous banquet—summon my guests, and let dance and revelry prevail!—[*cross,* R. H.] Lodine shall be mine this night, though heaven and hell combine to thwart me!—away!

[*Exit,* R. H.

Picolo. [*looking around, to see if he is observed, then advancing slowly.*] I shall abscond!—A hint's a hint to the wise, and I did hope that terrible *statue* scene would have moved *his marble heart!*—but no, he's resolved to ride post to the *low* country, and wants the pleasure of my company; but I've no curiosity to explore unknown

regions, and find this climate quite warm enough! So first to relieve poor Jaques from his dungeon, and then—[*stops suddenly in alarm.*] Eh! who's that?—[*looks out.*] Robert!—the devil! [*runs off,* L. H.

SCENE V.—*A gloomy dungeon among the rocks—a grated door in flat,* R. H. *above it a cavity large enough to admit a man.*

JAQUES *enters from an inner cell, as if just awaked from sleep—a long chain to his leg.*

Jaq. So! it be just as I did tell the scoundrels—I ha' had a pure comfortable nap on't. These are baddish lodgings for certain; however, I ha' been used to live cruel hard, and so I don't much mind it. [*goes to left wing.*] Eh! what!—bread and a flask! [*brings them forward.*] Theydon't mean to starve me like a dog, then.—[*drinks.*] Ah! sourish wine to be sure—however, the *toast* shall sweeten it. Here be Lodine's health, and confusion to the cowardly chap who could bear to see a pretty girl in distress, and not do his best to comfort and support her! [*Music.—Drinks—at this moment Picolo thrusts his head through a trap-door, oversets Jaques with the flask to his mouth—they look at each other a moment, their two faces expressing ludicrous surprise.*] Well! who art thee who do come lump into my lodgings?

Picolo. [*getting up the trap.*] A friend—I come to make your heart dance with joy.

Jaq. Let me hug thee.

Picolo. Psha! curse your hugging!—think of your escape. Look, here's a ladder. [*taking it up and closing the trap.*] Turn your eyes to the top of the rock, and where you see a star twinkling through the fog, like an old woman's eye through a veil, we may scamper off.

Jaq. But hang it, this plaguy chain!

Picolo. Look at this bunch of keys—I stole 'em from Serjeant Tipple as he lay snoring—they will unlock every fetter in this cursed rat-hole [*unlocks the padlock—the chain falls.*] as thus.

Jaq. Why then let's decamp.—But no—the bargain's off—I can't leave Lodine in this devil's den.

Picolo. For an hour you must, and then—

Jaq. No, not for a moment.

Picolo. I tell you that—[*noise of chains.*] St. An-

thony! here's a business—the guard is coming—down, down as flat as a flounder, and snore like a tinker!

[*Music.—He jumps down the trap, and shuts it—Jaques flings himself on the ground, wraps the chain about his leg, and pretends to sleep. The grated door opens.*

GONTRAN *enters,* R. H. *speaking to his men.*

Gon. Wait without—I'll be back directly. [*approaches Jaques.*] So, fast asleep! [*examines the chain.*] Zounds! the chain loose!—I'll settle that—hollo!

[*Music.—As he calls out, Jaques springs up, and stops his mouth with his hand—Picolo comes up the trap and assists Jaques.*

Picolo. Down with him neck and crop! [*Music.—They throw Gontran down the trap who calls for aid, and closes it on him.*] And now, the devil take the hindmost!

[*Music.—Runs up the ladder—Jaques follows—a soldier enters and climbs after him—Picolo throws down the ladder as he has gained the middle, and calls out—"Good-bye."—Scene closes.*

SCENE VI.—*A woody dell near the chateau.—night.*

March, piano.—Enter COUNT LINDOR *and* SOLDIERS, L. H.

Lin. Forward, my gallant followers!—The villain's garrison is thinly manned; but did his crowded legions treble ours, the soldier's arm, when nerved by virtue, will ever prove to foes invincible!—The guardian genius of our native land shall spread protecting pinions o'er the gallant hearts who bravely risk their lives in the defence of honour, virtue, and humanity!

CHORUS.

To arms! to arms! upon him rush!
To arms! at once the traitor crush!

SOLO.

Amid the shades of night,
Let war-fires flash a blaze of light,
While victory strides before ye;
Since for vengeance we fight,
Let the soul beat to arms,
And the word be—"*Death or Glory!*"

CHORUS.

To arms! to arms! &c. &c.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*Splendid gothic banquet chamber, arched in the centre, the opening covered with long curtains.—Music.—Male and female guests, vassals, &c. discovered.—To the right a couch, on which are seated Robert and Lodine, both elegantly attired.*

Rob. [*starting up.*] Wine, more wine!—the goblet fill, pledge the luscious beverage round! [*snatches a goblet from an attendant.*] Here's to Lodine, my young and blooming bride! [*drinks.*] Now, the dance, the dance! [*sits.*

[*A dance is performed, during which Robert reclines upon the couch and falls asleep;—suddenly the dance ceases—the music becomes agitated, and the guests and dancers disperse as if suddenly inspired with fear.—A pause.—Lodine rises.*

Lod. Ha! alone!—all silent!

Rob. [*in his sleep,*] Lodine!—my bride, my bride!

Lod. He sleeps!—auspicious moment!—could I but escape!—This way, perhaps. [*Music.—She advances towards the archway—at this instant a loud burst of thunder is heard, and the lights are suddenly extinguished.*] All good angels, guard me! [*Music.—The curtains in the archway are slowly raised, and disclose the statue of Matilda, upon whose face a light is cast resembling a moonbeam.*] Almighty powers! 'tis Matilda's shade!—Reproach me not, oh injured spirit, but shield, protect me! [L. H.

[*Music.—The Statue advances—makes a sign of protection to Lodine, then slowly approaches Robert.*

STATUE, [*in a sepulchral tone.*]

Robert! Robert! I've the ring,
The ring thou gav'st to me;
And thou'rt to me for ever wed
As I am wed to thee!

[*Lets fall its hand on his—a strong chord of music—Robert starts from his sleep.*

Rob. That dreadful voice! [*sees the statue.*] Hence, horrible phantom! [*rushes forward.*] Help!—save me! [*covers his face with his hands—the statue glides behind the curtains—a pause—Robert looks towards the couch.*] Gone! and yonder stands Lodine!—'Twas but a dream, then—yet 'twas terrible! [*alarms without*

Gon. [*without.*] To the walls! to the walls! the stle is attacked!

Rob. [*wildly.*] Ha! the castle attacked!—Let them me!—Lodine, Lodine shall be my shield!—she's mine i life or death! and thus I seize upon my *bride!*

[*Rushes towards the back and encounters the statue, who grasps his hand.*

Statue. Behold her! [*strong chord of music.*

Rob. [*sinking in terror on his knees.*] Oh, horror! rror!

[*Music.—Lodine utters a loud shriek, and falls upon the ground—a loud crash—the statue sinks with Robert, and flames issue from the chasm. The back scene likewise disappears, and discovers the castle ramparts crowded with Lindor's party, Jaques, &c. in contest with Robert's soldiers, who are overcome.—Jaques rushes forward and raises Lodine.—Tableau.—The castle is in flames, and the Curtain falls.*

Raymond, Richard John
Robert the Devil